



## Maricopa County

### Influenza (“The Flu”) Recommendations for the Home

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Influenza (“the flu”) is a respiratory disease that spreads easily. It is characterized by the sudden onset of fever, body aches, sore throat, headache and cough, and, in children, also can cause diarrhea and vomiting. The following recommendations can help prevent spreading the flu.

- **Any ill family member should not attend work or school.** Ill family members should stay home and rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- **Wash hands frequently** using soap and warm water for 15 to 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing the ABCs). Dry hands with a clean towel. Towels should be changed frequently. Young children should be instructed and assisted to make sure they wash their hands properly. Bathrooms should be checked regularly to ensure that soap and towels are available for your family’s use.
- Family members should cover their mouths when coughing and use a disposable tissue when sneezing or blowing their noses. Tissues should be thrown away immediately, and then hands should be washed. (If you cannot wash hands, rub hands with an alcohol hand sanitizer.) Make sure tissues are available in the home and cars.
- Encourage all high-risk members of your household, especially those with medical conditions and children between 6 and 23 months of age, to get a flu shot. It is never too late to be vaccinated.
- Spread of the flu in homes is likely. Families should avoid sharing glasses, forks, spoons, toothbrushes, etc.
- Common-use surfaces – such as door handles, handrails, kitchen table, etc. – should be cleaned frequently with a household cleaner or bleach solution. (Mixing  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup bleach with 1 gallon of water makes a bleach solution. Bleach solutions should be prepared daily.) If disinfectant is not available, hot soap and water can be used.
- Always wash your hands immediately after caring for a family member who is ill.
- If family members get the flu, especially if they are elderly or have other medical problems, you may wish to contact their physicians immediately. Their doctors can give antiviral drugs, which may stop them from getting seriously ill. However, taking these drugs does not mean you do not need to get a flu shot.